

May 6, 2015

National Hospice and Palliative Care
Organization



The Honorable Tom Reed
2437 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Mike Thompson
231 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Congressmen Reed and Thompson,

On behalf of the National Hospice and Palliative Care Organization and its more than 45,000 individual members, I am writing to thank you for your leadership and support of H.R. 2208, the Hospice Commitment to Accurate and Relevant Encounters (CARE) Act. NHPCO and its advocacy affiliate, the Hospice Action Network, enthusiastically support the Hospice CARE Act, which addresses practical ways to ensure that hospices can continue to deliver high quality end-of-life care in a way that reflects the operational realities of programs.

To ensure that hospices can focus on patient care while balancing regulatory requirements, the bipartisan Hospice CARE Act would (1) expand the types of hospice employed professionals who can have a face-to-face encounter to include physician assistants, (2) change the reference to “the 180th day recertification” to “the first 60 day period” in order to make the statute consistent with CMS’s interpretation, and (3) allow hospices up to 7 days after the patient elects hospice to provide a face-to-face encounter—in the limited circumstances of a hospice newly admitting a patient who requires a face-to-face encounter because of past hospice experience with a different hospice—so that admission isn’t delayed. These changes will make sure that patients are not denied timely access to hospice services, and that programs can prioritize quality care while remaining compliant.

NHPCO applauds your leadership on improving end-of-life care. We strongly support passage of this legislation, and look forward to working with you on this and future legislation that meets the need for all Americans to have access to quality end-of-life care.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "J. Donald Schumacher". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

J. Donald Schumacher
CEO/President, National Hospice & Palliative Care Organization